



The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy Implemented: July 2018
Review date February 2021

CONTEXT

The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School recognises that:

Students should attend school regularly to learn, to socialise with friends and prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and prosperity of the community.

There is a clear link between student achievement and their level of attendance at school. We want all our students to achieve the very best they can and for this they need to be in school regularly and on time.

- Late arrival disrupts the education not only of the student who is late but also of others in the class.
- It is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child attends the school where they are on roll.
- Some students and their parents/carers may need to be supported at times in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.

This school Attendance Policy will be reviewed every 3 years. The next review will take place before the 14/2/2021.

ATTENDANCE TARGET:

The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School aims to achieve attendance of at least 96% annually.

The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School recognises that:

All students will:

- Arrive by 8.45 am, appropriately prepared for the day, and register at both morning and afternoon registration.
- Attend school regularly, and for the whole school day, until 3.20 pm.
- Inform their tutor or Head of House of any problem or reason that affects their attendance at school.
- Follow the school protocol if required to leave school for any reason eg medical appointment
- Pass any note or letter about a recent or proposed absence to their tutor.

All our parents/carers will:

- Inform school of any changes to contact details.
- Ensure their child attends school every day, unless there is an exceptional reason for absence.
- Ensure their child arrives on time, prepared and equipped for the day.
- Inform the school by 9.00 am on each day of unforeseen absence.
- Respond to email or text alerts, sent by school in the event of an unforeseen absence

- Contact the school about any issues or concerns that may affect the attendance of their child.
- Inform the school in advance of any medical appointment during the school day that will necessitate absence even for part of a day.
- Ensure that students who have a medical appointment during the school day are only absent for the duration of the appointment and travel.

The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School will:

- Respond to concerns raised by both students and parents/carers in a prompt, fair and proper manner.
- Contact parents/carers if there are concerns about attendance that have not been explained.
- Report overall attendance figures on interim and full reports.
- Work with student, parents/carers, the school attendance advisor, the local authority and other outside agencies to resolve any issues that may be affecting attendance.
- Alert parents/carers if their child is absent and no authorisation or reason has been provided
- Contact the Local authority after 10 days if a child is missing education (CME).
- If there are any safeguarding concerns relating to prolonged absence or if a child is known to social services a referral to Herefordshire Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) will be made straight away.

PROCEDURES

Monitoring

Attendance performance throughout the school will be monitored in a number of ways:

- Weekly monitoring of morning and afternoon registration, for all vulnerable groups, to include Pupil Premium (FSM, Ever 6, LAC and Service 6) and SEN (E and K)
- Students who have a known history of poor attendance will be contacted on the first day of absence.
- Weekly review of whole school attendance by the Assistant Headteacher, Attendance Officer and the School Attendance Advisor.
- Weekly review of attendance by tutor group, to be conducted by the Head of House.
- Individual students' attendance will be included in reports to parents.
- The parent APP will provide a daily update of attendance

Registration

The register provides the daily record of attendance of all students. It contributes to a student's interim and full reports and references. It is a legal document that may be required in a court of law as evidence, for example in prosecutions for non-attendance.

The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School uses the SIMS electronic registration system. The main codes used are those laid down by the DfE:

- / present AM
- \ present PM
- O unauthorised absence
- I authorised absence for illness
- M authorised absence for medical/dentist appointment
- C authorised absence for other circumstances
- L late arrival before register closed
- H family holiday authorised by Headteacher
- G family holiday not authorised by Headteacher

- U late (after register closed) – unauthorised absence
- V educational visit or trip

The school day begins at 8.45 am with a warning bell for students. The registration time in the morning is at 8.50 am. Where a student arrives after 8.55, then he/she will be marked as late (L). Students late after 9.15 am will be coded as U, which constitutes legally as an unauthorised absence.

Follow up on absent students

Only the school can authorise absence, on the basis of information provided by parents/carers. Where explanations are not felt to be acceptable, the absence will remain unauthorised and the parents/carers informed.

Lateness

We aim to send an email alert to parents/carers, if students are late to school on a regular basis and there is no good reason.

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT IMPROVED ATTENDANCE

Incentives

Students will be rewarded for good attendance through vouchers, letters home, postcards, emails, certificates or Prom points. These will be recorded on SIMS according to the Rewards and Sanction policy. If this excellent attendance is maintained for one school year, then a 100% Bronze attendance badge will be awarded. If they can maintain this for two years, then a silver badge is awarded and gold badge is given for three years of 100% attendance.

Support in school

The school believes firmly in working in partnership with parent/carers to resolve issues. Parents/carers and students must contact the school if they are experiencing problems with attendance. This should be to the Head of House, Form Tutor, Learning mentor. Additional support can be provided through the School Attendance Advisor, School Counsellor or the Listening Link.

Links to other policies

In all cases where attendance is a problem, consideration will be given to whether any aspect of one of our other policies such as the safeguarding policy, anti-bullying policy, behaviour policy or special educational needs policy should be considered to help support improved attendance. For example, whether the student has an unrecognised special educational need that affects attendance.

Reintegration

We realise that returning to school following a period of absence can be very difficult for some young people, whatever the reason for their absence. In these situations school staff will plan carefully with parents/carers and student, together with any relevant agencies about how best to support the student's return to school.

PROCESS OF DEALING WITH ATTENDANCE CONCERNS

- Tutors discuss attendance during registrations and through mentoring and seek reasons for absence and lateness.
- They refer concerns about attendance to the Head of House or learning mentor, who will talk to the student.
- If matters do not improve, the Head of House or learning mentor will contact the parents/carers, so that they can take steps to deal with the absence/lateness and

ensure that they carry out their legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance.

- Where there is cause for concern, a letter explaining the importance of attendance and warning parents/carers about Penalties will be sent. This letter aims to encourage parents/carers to contact school to discuss the problem.
- The Head of House or learning mentor will liaise with the School Attendance Advisor, where there is a cause for concern. It is important that all actions taken to address poor attendance are logged and shared.
- Where attendance does not improve the matter will be referred to the school attendance advisor who will initially write to parents with the concerns. If there is no improvement, the School Attendance Advisor will make arrangements to meet, so as to discuss ways to improve attendance.
- Where there are high levels of absence for illness. School will request permission to liaise with the student's GP about the support we can offer or view medical evidence.
- Where there are high levels of unauthorised absence a referral may be made to the local authority to begin a prosecution under The Education Act 1996 Section 444 1(a). This would normally instigate a Penalty Notice Warning (PNW) followed by a Penalty Notice if the unauthorised absence persists. A penalty notice is a fine of £60, rising to £120 after 21 days issued to each parent or carer. Further to this the local authority may pursue matters in court.

Absence for family holidays in term time

Only the Headteacher (or delegated member of the SLT) has the right to authorise any absence from school. The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School believes that students need to be in school to benefit from the education offered and only in the most exceptional circumstances will the Headteacher authorise holidays in term time. Parents/carers should use the existing 13 weeks of school holidays for holiday/trips. By definition, exceptional trips do not occur regularly or often and are not holidays that could be taken at another time (albeit incurring a higher cost)

If parents/carers feel that they need to request an absence, then they should write to the Headteacher at least 6 weeks before the proposed holiday. Parents/carers will be informed by letter if an application has been successful or not.

If a parent chooses to take their child on holiday, when it has not been agreed, then a penalty notice may be issued by the local authority. This is a fine of £60 per parent per child, if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 per parent per child, if paid within 28 days.

APPENDIX 1 –

PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE EVENT OF A PLANNED OR UNFORSEEN ABSENCE

Absences are checked shortly after the registers close in the morning. We expect that parents/carers will have contacted the school in the event of an unforeseen absence and this information will be logged on our system. In the event of an unforeseen absence we request that parents/carers inform us as soon as possible. This can be done via email (preferred) using the 'Contact us' link on the school website or by phone on 01432 347563. Our admin team will then check through the phone calls, emails, the morning registers and the registers for lesson 1. If we can't account for a student whereabouts, we will contact parents/carers (listed as priority contacts) via email or text as soon as possible. If necessary we will also make a phone call.

Once this alert has been sent, we may send out another email to the parents/carers of all other absentees. Although parents/carers may have phoned, we do need a written record, either by email, letter or text. We request that they respond to this email with a few brief details and this information will be stored under the child's name. There is no need to send in a note if the email has been responded to. Parents/carers can still send a written note if they would prefer and this will be scanned and attached to the child's data record. These notes should be taken directly to student services.

Parents and carers must also telephone the school or write a note to let us know about a medical appointment or another circumstance that will result in an absence. Students will not be allowed to leave the school site unless we have authorisation from parents and carers. Reception staff will not allow a student to leave the premises unless the signed note has been authorised by student services or a parent/carer is there to collect them.

Registers are also taken at the start of every lesson using SIMS. Lesson registration enables patterns of internal truancy to be identified, which may indicate problems with a particular subject or a wider issue. Any student present in the previous lesson, but absent in the next lesson without good cause will try to be located. In the event that the student can't be found, then parents/carers will be contacted. If a student is absent without their parents' /carers' knowledge then this is a safeguarding matter, as they may be putting themselves at risk in a number of ways. Communication between home and school is vital in helping to prevent this occurring and reducing risk.